The Brethren Evangelist.

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Is It I?

Laborers wanted—the ripening grain
Waits to welcome the reaper's cry;
The Lord of the harvest calls again;
Who among us shall first reply,
"Who is wanted, Lord? Is it I?"

The Master calls, but the servants wait;
Fields gleam white 'neath a cloudless sky;
Will none seize sickle before too late?
Winds of Winter come sweeping by—
Who is delaying? Is it I?

—Anonymous.

Expression of Grief on Account of Valens.

Written by Polycarp, a disciple of St. John and burned at the stake after being a Christian 86 years.

I am greatly grieved for Valens, who was once a Presbyter among you, because he so little understands the place that was given him [in the church.] I exhort you, therefore, that ye abstain from covetousness, and that ye be chaste and truthful. 'Abstain from every form of evil.' For if a man can not govern himself in such matters, how shall he enjoin them upon others? If a man does not keep himself from covetousness he shall be defiled by idolatry, and shall be judged as one of the heathens. But who of us are ignorant of the judgment of the Lord? Do we not know that the saints shall judge the world? as Paul teaches. But I have neither seen nor heard any such things among you, in the minds of whom the blessed Paul labored, and who are commended in the beginning of his epistle. For he boasts of you in all those churches which alone then knew the Lord; but we [of Smyrnia] had not yet known him. I am deeply grieved therefore of him (Valens) and his wife; to whom may the Lord grant true repentance!

And be ye moderate in regard to this matter, and 'do not count such as enemies,' but call them back as suffering and straying members, that ye may save your whole body, for by so acting ye shall edify yourselves.

Life is a series of surprises, and would not be worth taking or keeping it it were not. God delights to isolate us every day, and hide from us the past and the future.

The greater power we have over sin, the more intolerable do we feel the burden of it, and the more earnestly do we seek the cleansing of that blood which purges the conscience from its defilement.

One of the good results of putting a good book into a family is that it will be likely to create a demand for another of like quality. The appetite for good reading, like the pleasure of it, never satiates.—Nashville Advocate.

He who has learned to commune with God becomes able to see him everywhere. Prayer places us, with all our surroundings, in the light of the eternal. —Canon Westcott.

Never part without loving words for your loved ones to think of during your absence. It may be that you will not meet again in this life.

Pacifics.

I understand that Eld. H. R. Holsinger has purchased a piece of ground near Lathrop, and he now intends to build on it and to make his home there. He has also engaged to preach at that place this year. I am glad to hear such good news, and hope that his residence and labors there may result in great and lasting good.

It is said that Bro. Richard Plummer, of Lathrop, has gone to San Francisco. He should have been kept at work in this great valley as a traveling evangelist. I did not learn what he is engaged in now, but hope he will be able to work, in some line, for the salvation of souls.

We are a little surprised and much pleased to learn that Bro. Jerrold has found his way to this coast, and we will endeavor to form an acquaintance with him as early as possible. As he and Bro. Plummer are both in our metropolis, it would be well for them, and, no doubt, good for our cause, it they should meet with each other and labor together.

The Brethren Annual.—Yesterday it reached us for 1889. We are pleased with it, especially its historical and statistical features. It is probable, however, that the historian in noting the progress of the work in the Miami Valley, did not begin at the proper point. There was work done at Zimmermanville, Bear Creek, and a few other points in the valley, before there was any step taken at Farmersville. I do not seek notoriety, but, before the Standard History of the Brethren is published, I would cite the historian to Bro. J. A. Ridenour, Bro. J. W. Fitzgerald and Bro. Samuel Kiehl.

The Gospel According to Jesus.—I have read it with care, and, although, like all other books, it contains some things that expose it to unfavorable criticism, yet it is an excellent work, and we should do what we can to give it a wide circulation. It should not only be in every library of our members, but it should be made an evangelist to carry the gospel and a knowledge of the faith and practice of the Brethren throughout the land. There is no telling how much good could be done by the use of this book. If you have not read it do not delay in getting and reading it, and when you have read it, send it out on its great mission. It may reclaim your friends and neighbors from error, lead them into the knowledge of the truth and win them to Christ.

The EVANGELIST comes regularly and we feel a great interest in it. Since the beginning of the current volume it seems to breathe more fraternally and divinely, and it appears to be more thoroughly rooted and grounded in the faith and set for the defence and spread of the gospel. If those who write for its columns continue to grow in carefulness not to say anything except what they know will have a good tendency, we shall do well. There is room for us all to improve; and, as we improve, the paper will be improved, and its power for good will be increased. Watch, pray, write, weigh, and do not send one sentence or word for publication that can do harm. Let all be for good.

In No. 3 the article headed, 'The Anchor of the Church,' is of more than ordinary importance. We should be able and willing, yea, anxious, not only to give a reason for the hope that is in us. We ought to do it in meekness, but we ought also to do it with all firmness and boldness. If we have no distinctive doctrine or practice, required by God's word, we should have no distinct organization. Every member should endeavor to know how far we agree with others and wherein, on gospel grounds, we differ. It might be well to remember, however, that if we could find our entire faith and practice distributed among the several churches, unless we found all essentials in one body, there is a sufficient reason for our existence. I am and always was sorry for the necessity of distinct organization; but, since the necessity existed, and still exists, I am thankful to God for the privilege. We should all be able to preach our best sermon on the text, 'Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6: 17, 18.

Another interesting article is headed, 'An Awkward Text.' The Translation proposed, in some respects, seems to be an improvement on the King James' and revised versions; but if we want to be translators, why not be true to the original? I do not often undertake a work of such great importance, but in this instance, I am prompted to offer a translation, my own, of the 'Awkward Text,' 1 Pet. 3: 1, 2. Here it is: 'Likewise (the) wives submitting yourselves to your own husbands, so that (even) if some are disobedient to the word, through the conduct of the wives, without a word, they may be gained, having seen your pure conduct in fear.'

The words in parenthesis are found in the Vatican Manuscript. 'Likewise' means 'in like manner,' and refers to the 18th verse of the preceding chapter, 'Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear.' This shows that the 'fear' (*phoboi*) was in those who were in subjection and not in the masters or husbands. It is allowable to render *aneu logou* 'without speech,' but it is not necessary; and it is more natural to render it 'without a word.' *Phobos* or *phoboi* as in the text, does not mean 'wonder' and it is not allowable to do any 'stretching of the word' to make it conform to our understanding or notion. If Peter had intended to say 'wonder' he would have used *thauma* or *thambos*. It is this 'very little stretching' of words, or the meaning of words, that gives us so many different translations and so much trouble. Instead of 'stretching' the word to suit our views we must learn to bend our notions or views to the true meaning of the word. There are many reasons why wives should live in 'fear,' especially while they are in subjection to husbands who are 'disobedient to the word' so that their conduct may be pure or chaste, and it is not hard to see how such lives, of such wives, without a word, can gain such husbands.

I want to say to all that we now have a new post office nearer our home, and hereafter, until some change is made, our address will be Vernalis, San Joaquin Co., California. Let our correspondents note the change.

J. W. BEER.

Jan. 28, 1889.

A Home Effort.

I have been one of those that felt too weak to conduct a series of meetings and therefore never made the attempt until the last few weeks and as the brethren and sisters felt that it was rather expensive to send off for a preacher, I presented myself in earnest prayer to God for strength, for about one week, and told the brethren I would then commence the meetings, insisted that they should pray for the spirit in the coming effort. When the time came to commence I felt stronger than I ever did in my life. I was confident that our prayers were being answered and what I had looked upon as a burden became a delight to me, and I never labored with the same ease in all my ministry. Prayer is the secret of success beyond all doubts in the spiritual work and life. I continued the meetings three weeks and the result was four were baptized and five more will be.

The church has been greatly revived and they are now raising money to build a church and many that are not members are warm in the cause and contribute liberally. The immediate results, we believe are only a foretaste greater and more brilliant blessing that is in reservation for us. Among those that were baptized is one (E. Harkins,) who has more than an ordinary talent; in fact he is a young man that should be schooled for the ministry. He can do as well now as many that have been in the ministry for years. He was raised a Presbyterian, strictly moral but being convinced by the Baptists he was immersed by them, and in the course of our meetings when he saw more light he accepted it and was submerged in to the triune power of heaven. Now he knows no one can question his baptism.

A word for Bro. Mason's book and I will close. I have examined it and have fell in love with it, though in my opinion it may not be perfect, few books are. I feel that the brethren would greatly help the cause by placing the book in the unconverted families of their vicinity. A good plan would be for the church to buy them and loan them if they cannot sell them.

JOHN A. MYERS.

Millersburg, Iowa.

The Unwritten Constitution of the Brethren Church.

Last Lords' day Bro. A. L. Garber pastor of the Ashland church, preached his second discourse on the teachings of the Brethren church at the College. He quoted from the great Shaff-Herzog Encyclopedia a definition of creed as follows: A confession of faith for public use. It may merely state the essentials of belief or entire body of doctrine. It may be written or oral, secret or published. *It must however be authoritative.* He stated that the Bible was the only authoritative church document, or rule of faith and practice, recognized in the church. It had been so received at the Dayton convention, and therefore was the only authoritative confession of faith, or creed in the church; according to the definition given of a creed in said standard religious Encyclopedia.

He then quoted the definition of a constitution from Webster's Lexicon, as follows: 'The principles or fundamental laws which govern a state or other organized body of men, and are embodied in written documents, or implied in the institutions and usages of the country or society.' He explained that the Brethren church had no written constitution, but that a part of the definition applied, and could be thus expressed:

The constitution of the Brethen church is implied in its institutions and usages. He continued by calling attention to a few of the institutions of the church. One of the articles of the unwritten constitution, or principles governing the church, is that Trine Immersion only is recognized as Christian baptism and the only door into the membership of the church. He referred to the great care that Alexander Mack had taken to travel over Europe, and examine into the evidence before him, and then decided upon that mode of baptism, which was always practiced by the Tunkers, in which he found his parentage and every reasonable evidence elsewhere proved the truthfulness of the practice. He emphasized the point, that Trine Immersion was in no sense three baptisms, because more than half of the person remained submerged during the performance of the rite.

Another article of the unwritten constitution, he called the Festival Lord's Supper. He explained that festival was an appropriate word as it carried with it the idea of a meal or repast, which with the bread and wine together constituted a true and proper Lord s Supper. That the Supper was a gathering of the members of one family, so to speak, where they could have a communion with each other in enjoying one another's presence, and sit together and eat, and partake of the bread and wine, a communion with the Lord. In this connection close and open communion were alluded to, and he placed close communion, without the old time rigor as one of the articles of the unwritten constitution. He argued that it was good not to extend any invitation, as all the members of a church, as a family of God, knew what the purpose of the Supper was and would take their places. That an invitation given generally, implied a willingness, according to the common rules of courtesy to accept an invitation from those who might partake of the hospitality extended, and if persons of other practices and modes of baptism should come and participate with us and then in turn invite us to participate with them, we would be obliged to go, or refuse and then be charged with being stiffnecked, selfish etc. To commune with others would be equal to a belittlement of our teaching.

He named the washing of the saints feet as another article, also Laying on of hands as a memorial by elders, and according to the Apostlic command; and the salutation as an Apostolic command. Time did not allow a canvass of the whole field. The text was: 2 Tim I, xiii—'Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me.'

The subject will be Trine Immersion, next Lord's Day.

Real friendship is a slow grower, and never thrives unless ingrafted upon a stock of known and reciprocal merit.—Lord Chesterfield.